



# Qatar: Background and U.S. Relations

**Christopher M. Blanchard**  
Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs

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## Summary

Qatar, a small peninsular country in the Persian Gulf, emerged as a partner of the United States in the mid-1990s and currently serves as host to major U.S. military facilities. Qatar holds the third-largest proven natural gas reserves in the world, and its small population enjoys the second-highest per capita income in the world. The emir of Qatar, Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, has managed a course of major economic growth and very limited political liberalization since replacing his father in a bloodless palace coup in 1995. The emir has undertaken several projects to capitalize on Qatar's hydrocarbon resources and improve educational opportunities for Qatari citizens in support of economic diversification. As part of Qatar's liberalization experiment, the Qatari monarchy founded Al Jazeera, the first all-news Arabic language satellite television network, in 1995. In an April 2003 referendum, Qatari voters approved a new constitution that officially granted women the right to vote and run for national office. The latest elections for the Central Municipal Council were held in April 2007. Elections are being planned for a national Advisory Council established by the new constitution, but no target date has been set.

Following joint military operations during Operation Desert Storm in 1991, Qatar and the United States concluded a Defense Cooperation Agreement that has been subsequently expanded. In April 2003, the U.S. Combat Air Operations Center for the Middle East moved from Prince Sultan Airbase in Saudi Arabia to Qatar's Al Udeid airbase south of Doha, the Qatari capital. Al Udeid and other facilities in Qatar serve as logistics, command, and basing hubs for the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations, including Iraq and Afghanistan.

In spite of serving as the host to a large U.S. military presence and supporting U.S. regional initiatives, Qatar has remained mostly secure from terrorist attacks. Terrorist statements indicate that energy infrastructure and U.S. military facilities in Qatar remain potential targets. U.S. officials have described Qatar's counterterrorism cooperation since 9/11 as significant; however, some observers have raised questions about possible support for Al Qaeda by some Qatari citizens, including members of Qatar's large ruling family. According to the 9/11 Commission Report, Qatar's current Interior Minister provided safe haven to 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed during the mid-1990s, and press reports indicate other terrorists may have received financial support or safe haven in Qatar after September 11, 2001.

Human rights concerns persist. The 2009 State Department human rights report on Qatar notes that basic civil liberties are restricted and states that the foreign workers who make up most of the country's population of 1.67 million "in many cases worked under circumstances that constituted forced labor." Since 2007, the State Department has reported that enacted safety and labor rights regulations remain largely unenforced, and foreign diplomats' visits to labor camps revealed "the majority of unskilled foreign laborers living in cramped, dirty, and hazardous conditions, often without running water, electricity, or adequate food."

Qatari officials have taken an increasingly active diplomatic role in recent years, seeking to position themselves as mediators and interlocutors in a number of regional conflicts. Qatar's willingness to embrace Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas as part of its mediation and outreach initiatives has at times appeared to anger officials in other regional countries. In February 2010, Qatar signed a defense cooperation agreement with neighboring Iran. The Obama Administration has not voiced public concern about Qatar's foreign policy and, like the Bush Administration, has sought to preserve and expand military and counterterrorism cooperation with Qatar.

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## Recent Developments

### Israel and the Palestinians

Qatar continues to engage with Palestinian political leaders and has recently facilitated dialogue between Fatah and Hamas. Hamas political leader Khaled Meshaal and other Hamas leaders visited Doha in early April 2010 and met with Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and Prime Minister Shaikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al Thani. Fatah Central Committee member Nabil Shaath also visited Doha during this period and engaged in unofficial discussions with Hamas representatives.<sup>1</sup> Qatar has supported the Arab League position backing indirect negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, even as Qatari leaders have criticized recent Israeli decisions on settlements and Jerusalem that they feel undermine prospects for a two-state solution. An Israeli trade office in Doha was shuttered by the Qatari government in response to the January 2009 Gaza war and has not been reopened.

### Qatari-Iranian Relations

Qatar continues its policy of engagement with Iran, which is based on the countries' shared energy reserves and Qatar's calculation that any regional conflict involving Iran may invite attacks on U.S. forces and installations based in Qatar. Qatari and Iranian officials signed a defense and security cooperation agreement in February 2010, and, in April 2010, Qatari military officers reportedly were invited to observe Iranian military drills in the Persian Gulf. In the run-up to the security agreement, Emir Hamad bin Khalifa visited Iran on November 5, 2009, to discuss regional and bilateral issues, security, and Iran-GCC cooperation.<sup>2</sup> Joint maritime and border security agreements were negotiated in late 2009. The chief of staff of the Qatari armed forces, Major General Hamad bin Ali al Attiyah, also travelled to Iran in July 2009 and held security talks with Iranian defense officials, including the commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps. In February 2010, Qatari Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassem Al Thani reportedly encouraged the United States to engage directly with Iran in order to resolve the ongoing dispute over Iran's nuclear program.<sup>3</sup> The prime minister also has characterized Iran's 2009 election dispute as "an internal matter" and stated, "we must respect the right of each state to solve its own problems."<sup>4</sup>

### Sudan and Darfur

Sudanese President Omar Hassan al Bashir visited Doha in February 2010 to sign a ceasefire agreement with Darfur's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The agreement marked an

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Open Source Center Report

<sup>2</sup> The term "Emir" (or Amir), often translated as prince, is the term used for monarch or ruler in the Persian Gulf region. The term "Shaikh" (or Sheikh or Shaykh) is an honorific title, which can mean a ruler, a tribal leader, or a venerable religious figure. "Shaikh" is pronounced with a long A (as in "say"), not a long E (as in "see").

<sup>3</sup> OSC Report GMP20100215135001, Mobin Pandit, "Talk Directly to Iran, US Told. Doha: Qatar Yesterday Urged the United States to Talk Directly to Iran on the Nuclear Issue," *The Peninsula* (Doha), February 15, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> OSC Report GMP20090624615003, "Qatari Premier Discusses Qatar's Mediations, Ties with Egypt, Israel, Al-Jazirah," June 24, 2009.

important milestone in nearly two years of Qatari effort as the leader of the Arab League's mediation group for the conflict in Darfur. In spite of the February agreement, further progress in the Sudan-JEM talks has been lacking, and, on May 4, 2010, JEM officials formally suspended participation in the Qatar-sponsored peace talks, citing Sudanese armed forces attacks against a JEM stronghold area near the border with Chad.

President Bashir's visit was his second to Qatar since the issuance of an international warrant for his arrest by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Qatar has rejected the ICC decision and warrant, considering it disruptive to its efforts and those of others to mediate a peace agreement between the government of Sudan and a number of rebel groups in Darfur. A follow-on ceasefire agreement between Sudan and Darfur's Liberation and Justice Movement was signed in Doha in March 2010. The Qatari government also has announced plans to help capitalize a new development bank for Darfur but has not made a specific monetary pledge to date.

## **Qatar's Economy**

In February 2010, the *Middle East Economic Digest* judged that "Qatar is enjoying a period of unparalleled prosperity."<sup>5</sup> Qatar's energy-fueled GDP growth and small population have catapulted the country toward the top of the global per capita GDP rankings, with a 2009 Central Intelligence Agency estimate of \$121,700. The IMF estimates that economic growth reached 9% in 2009, in spite of the global recession, and will remain strong for the medium term.<sup>6</sup> The IMF expects Qatar's fiscal surpluses to continue through 2014, in spite of the retreat of oil prices from their 2008 high, which brought record revenue to Qatar's treasury. The pending completion of the long-planned expansion of liquefied natural gas (LNG) output to 78 million tones per year is expected to buoy public revenue, even amid the current decline in global natural gas prices. Qatar has imposed a temporary pause in new natural gas projects until 2015 in order to study the effects of completed projects on the country's gas reserves and to plan for efficient management of gas resources for the future.

Many regional economic experts are arguing that although the global credit crunch and resulting recession have significantly lowered the value of many Qatari real estate and local stock holdings, the experience may turn out to be a net positive for economies like Qatar's, where rapidly expanding real estate sectors and inflows of speculative capital were driving inflation rates into the double digits and local banks were not exercising good management practices over their lending portfolios. In describing Qatar's response to the losses facing its banking sector, the *Middle East Economic Digest* described Qatar as having "probably the most interventionist government in the region." Qatar has invested close to \$6 billion to purchase several types of asset holdings from its domestic banks in an effort to ensure that the banks continue lending. The IMF praised the Qatari bailout program in its February 2010 Article IV staff report.

Some observers have raised questions about the long-term ability of Qatar to attract private sector investment and produce employment opportunities once the current phase of large state-supported infrastructure investment is complete. By all accounts, Qatari officials remain confident in their economic prospects and appear to have used the downturn as an opportunity to assess lessons learned during the country's recent boom, to reconsider planned projects, and, where possible, to

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<sup>5</sup> *Middle East Economic Digest*, "Qatar's peaking energy market," February 12, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Qatar: 2009 Article IV Consultation—Staff Report, IMF Country Report No. 10/41*, February 10, 2010.

take advantage of lower input costs by delaying project start dates or renegotiating contracts. Managing the infrastructure and service needs created by the influx of laborers to the country remains the immediate challenge. In the short run, Qatari authorities are focused on completing a series of energy projects and expanding water, health, and electricity infrastructure to meet the needs of the population.

## **U.S.-Military Cooperation**

The Al Udeid airbase south of Doha, the Qatari capital, serves as a logistics, command, and basing hub for U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Nearby Camp As Sayliyah houses significant U.S. military equipment pre-positioning and command facilities for the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations.<sup>7</sup> Both Qatar and the United States have invested in the construction and expansion of these facilities since the mid-1990s, and they form the main hub of the CENTCOM air and ground logistical network in the AOR. As a result of ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. and partner nation facilities in Qatar and elsewhere have received higher use in recent years and may require further investment to meet current and potential future needs.<sup>8</sup> The Obama Administration requested \$60 million in FY2010 military construction funds for further upgrades to U.S. military facilities in Qatar as part of an ongoing expansion and modernization program that has been underway since 2003 at a cost of over \$200 million. The Administration's FY2011 military construction request for Qatar is \$64.3 million. The Administration also requested \$10,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) assistance funds for Qatar in FY2010, and is requesting an additional \$10,000 for FY2011. The nominal amount of IMET assistance has the administrative effect of making Qatar eligible to purchase other U.S. military training at a reduced cost level that is available only to IMET recipients. The U.S. military has deployed Patriot anti-ballistic missile defense systems to some publicly unnamed Gulf countries, ostensibly to defend against potential missile attacks from Iran.

## **Counterterrorism**

The 2008 U.S. State Department country report on terrorism in Qatar states that “while counterterrorism cooperation between Qatar and the United States remained positive, the United States continued to strive for increased cooperation with the Qatari government on information sharing.” The report notes joint training initiatives and credits Qatar with a number of administrative arrangements designed to improve the government’s ability to detect and respond to terrorist threats. As of May 4, 2010, the State Department’s updated 2010 report had not been issued.

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<sup>7</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Defense, “Qatar continues to host the Combined Air Operations Center, which provides airpower command and control for Afghanistan. Qatar also hosts USCENTCOM’s forward headquarters, which has a crucial command and control responsibility for Afghanistan.” U.S. Department of Defense, Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, Report to Congress in accordance with section 1230 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (P.L. 110-181), April 2010, p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> According to CENTCOM Commander General Petraeus, “Fully functional Forward Operating Sites and Cooperative Security Locations are essential to our ability to conduct the full spectrum of military operations, engage with and enable partner nations, and act promptly and decisively. Pre-positioned stocks and reset equipment provide critical support to this strategy but require reconstitution and modernization after having been partially expended to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.” Statement of General David H. Petraeus before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 16, 2010.

At times, Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Holbrooke has tried to refocus international attention on illicit finance flows from the Persian Gulf region, indicating that counterterrorist financing cooperation may be an issue that requires further scrutiny. In June 2009, he argued that, “In the past, there was a kind of a feeling ... that the money all came from drugs in Afghanistan. That is simply not true. Time and time again, people go back to private individuals who support the extremists, who bring money in various illegal ways.... And the area that seems to be focused on is usually the GCC countries.”<sup>9</sup> Senator John Kerry has voiced specific concerns about alleged Qatari government and private support to Hamas, arguing in April 2009 that “Qatar ... can’t continue to be an American ally on Monday that sends money to Hamas on Tuesday.”<sup>10</sup>

## Political Profile

Qatar, a small peninsular state bordering Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf, is a constitutional monarchy governed by the Al Thani family. The country gained independence from the United Kingdom on September 3, 1971. Of the country’s approximately 1.6 million people, only 225,000 are citizens: the rest are foreign residents and temporary laborers.<sup>11</sup> Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani replaced his father as Qatar’s ruler in a 1995 palace coup and has survived at least one counter-coup attempt.

On June 27, 1995, in a bloodless palace coup, Shaikh Hamad replaced his father, Khalifa, who had ruled Qatar for 23 years. At the time, Khalifa had turned over many routine affairs of state to Shaikh Hamad, then crown prince and commander of Qatar’s small armed forces. Key members of the ruling Al Thani family rallied behind Shaikh Hamad, who quickly consolidated control. In February 1996, supporters of Shaikh Hamad’s father unsuccessfully attempted a counter-coup, which prompted Shaikh Hamad to initiate civil proceedings against his father to retrieve an alleged \$3-\$12 billion of state assets supposedly in his possession.<sup>12</sup> The alleged mastermind of the counter-coup attempt, Shaikh Hamad’s cousin and a former minister, Shaikh Hamad bin Jassem bin Hamad Al Thani, was captured outside of Qatar and prosecuted. Saudi Arabian mediation facilitated an out-of-court settlement between the emir and his father, and they have reconciled.

Shaikh Hamad, at age 54, has been described as a representative of a new generation of Persian Gulf leaders alongside the sons of the late Shaikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi and Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid of Dubai.<sup>13</sup> Like King Abdullah II of Jordan, Shaikh Hamad was educated in the United Kingdom and holds degrees from Sandhurst Military Academy and Cambridge University. Shaikh Hamad has three wives and 11 children. In 1997, the emir underwent kidney transplant surgery in the United States.

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<sup>9</sup> Jay Solomon, “U.S. Targets Flow of Funds To Insurgents,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 6, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> US Fed News, “Sen. Kerry Speaks on Middle East to Brookings Institute,” April 2, 2009.

<sup>11</sup> As of April 30, 2010, the Qatar Statistics Authority reported that the population had reached 1.67 million people, of which 1.27 million were male and 400,000 were female. The State Department 2009 report on human rights in Qatar estimates that there are 225,000 Qatari citizens.

<sup>12</sup> Some Qataris believe that the government of Saudi Arabia supported Shaikh Khalifa in his attempt to return to power in Qatar. See Craig S. Smith, “A Tiny Gulf Kingdom Bets its Stability on Support for U.S.,” *The New York Times*, October 24, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> The Emir’s official website is available at [http://www.diwan.gov.qa/english/main\\_page\\_english\\_NF.htm](http://www.diwan.gov.qa/english/main_page_english_NF.htm).

## Structure of Government

The emir is head of the executive branch of the Qatari government and appoints members of the Al Thani family and other notables to a governing Council of Ministers (cabinet), which is headed by Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al Thani. The country's constitution (approved in April 2003 and in force as of June 2005) formalized Qatari tradition that the rule of the state is hereditary within the Al Thani family. In addition, the constitution reflects the previously contested principle that future successors to the throne will follow the line of the emir's male offspring.<sup>14</sup> Previous succession decisions have been characterized by rivalry among different branches of the Al Thani family. In spite of the codification, it is unclear whether a future transition to Shaikh Hamad's heir would be contested by other elements of the royal family, who, by all accounts, continue to compete for influence and attention. In August 2003, the emir replaced his third-oldest son, Jassem bin Hamad Al Thani, as his heir apparent. His fourth-oldest son, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, is now the named successor to the Qatari monarchy; he is 29 years old.<sup>15</sup>

The constitution states that legislative authority will reside in the hands of a 45-member Advisory Council (*Majlis Al Shura*), two-thirds of which will be directly elected and one-third appointed by the emir from among ministers or others.<sup>16</sup> The emir appoints all of the members of the current Advisory Council; members serve four-year terms at the emir's discretion. A special electoral law for new Advisory Council elections was passed in May 2008 after concerns about voter franchise extension were resolved.<sup>17</sup> In the interim, the term of the current Advisory Council has been extended through 2010. Some observers doubt that the Qatari leadership intends to fully implement the changes implied in the 2003 constitution because democratic decision making could disrupt existing patronage relationships that ensure the support of rival social and royal family factions for the monarchy.<sup>18</sup>

Although national elections for the new Advisory Council have been delayed and a target date has not been set, administrative preparations reportedly continue, and women will have the right to vote in the elections and to run for office. The Advisory Council will have oversight authority

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<sup>14</sup> The constitution was approved in a nationwide referendum in which 96.6% of participating voters (68,987) approved the constitution and only 3.3% opposed it (2,145).

<sup>15</sup> Jassem bin Hamad replaced his older brother Mishaal bin Hamad as heir apparent in October 1996. Shaikh Jassem reportedly was either dissatisfied with his lack of substantive responsibilities, or did not have an interest in continuing to serve as crown prince. According to some reports, the Emir's second-oldest son, Fahd bin Hamad Al Thani, closely associated himself with Arab volunteers to the anti-Soviet conflict in Afghanistan during the 1980s and is believed to retain close ties to conservative Islamic figures. See Michael Knights and Anna Solomon-Schwartz, "The Broader Threat from Sunni Islamists in the Gulf," *PolicyWatch* #883, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 19, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Prior to the establishment of a partially elected national assembly, Qatar had a fully-appointed, 35-member advisory council that could only make recommendations to the Council of Ministers. Qatar's old Provisional Constitution provided for a modified electoral procedure in choosing members of the Council and a three-year term; nevertheless, the Council remained appointive in practice, and terms of the Council members were extended in three or four-year increments since 1975.

<sup>17</sup> Reportedly some members of the Al Thani family sought to restrict voting rights to so-called "native" Qataris whose families have lived in Qatar since 1930 or before. The 2007 U.S. Department of State Human Rights report for Qatar estimated that an electorate with that criteria could be "less than 50,000." Under a compromise, post-1930 naturalized citizens who have been citizens for ten years will have voting rights and will be eligible to run for office if their fathers were born in Qatar. *Economist Intelligence Unit*, "Advisory Council approves new electoral law," June 1, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Mehran Kamrava, "Royal Factionalism and Political Liberalization in Qatar," *Middle East Journal*, Volume 63, Issue 3, July 1, 2009.

over the Council of Ministers and will be able to propose legislation and review budgets. The constitution also empowers the Advisory Council to issue motions of no-confidence against government ministers; no-confidence motions must be approved by two-thirds of the Advisory Council. Council members will serve four-year terms.

## **Political Reform and Elections**

Shaikh Hamad and his advisers have embarked on a limited political reform program designed to gradually make Qatar's government more participatory and accountable. Although a series of national elections have been held (see below), the government continues to maintain strict limits on freedoms of assembly and association; a series of new laws allow for individuals to organize political demonstrations and public gatherings, but organizers must obtain a permit from the government, and Qatari authorities may impose restrictions on the topics of discussion. Political parties are not allowed in Qatar, and all private professional and cultural associations must register with the state and are monitored.

Qatari authorities have allowed a series of national elections as components of the country's gradual transition toward greater democratic participation. The elections also have provided a "trial and error" setting for the creation and improvement of Qatar's national electoral infrastructure. In April 1998, 3,700 business community leaders participated in an election for a national Chamber of Commerce, selecting 17 members from a slate of 41 candidates. In a March 1999 Central Municipal Council election, 248 candidates (including six women) competed for 29 seats, and all adult Qatari citizens, with the exception of members of the police and armed forces, were allowed to vote and run for office. The election marked the first time a Persian Gulf country had enfranchised all of its male and female citizens in a nationwide election.<sup>19</sup> In April 2003, national elections for the Municipal Council's new term resulted in the first electoral victory for a Qatari female candidate, Shaikha Yousef Al Jiffri, an appointed officer at the Education Ministry who ran unopposed.<sup>20</sup> The latest round of elections was held in April 2007, and voter turnout was higher than in previous elections. Authorities announced that 51% of 28,000 eligible Qatari voters cast ballots—nearly 90% of the country's population of 1.6 million are ineligible to vote because they are foreign nationals.<sup>21</sup>

Although the Municipal Council functions primarily in an advisory role to the Ministry of Municipal and Agricultural Affairs, some observers view it as a stepping-stone to the wider political liberalization implied by the creation of the Advisory Council in the new constitution. Similarly, the national elections for the Municipal Council are seen by Qatari officials as test cases for future Advisory Council elections.

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<sup>19</sup> All six female candidates were defeated in the 1999 election.

<sup>20</sup> "Qatar Elects First Woman to Council Doha," *Gulf News*, April 8, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Dow Jones, "Qatari Officials Pleased With Voter Turnout In Municipal Poll," April 2, 2007.

## Human Rights and Social Issues

### Human Rights and Labor Conditions

The U.S. State Department *Country Report on Human Rights for 2009* states that Qatar's government "placed restrictions on civil liberties, including freedoms of speech, press (including the Internet), assembly, association, and religion."<sup>22</sup> The report also states that "there were prolonged detentions in overcrowded and harsh facilities, often ending in deportation." According to the report, the rights of non-citizens are at times abused, particularly among domestic servants from the Philippines and Southeast Asia. As in other Gulf countries, expatriate laborers are vulnerable to exploitation by employers who capitalize on their fear of deportation. Citizenship is withheld from foreign workers, who outnumber native Qataris in the labor force by an estimated ratio of more than six to one.<sup>23</sup>

In December 2004, Qatar announced that it was banning the use of children as camel jockeys, a practice long decried by the international community. Qatar remained a Tier 2 Watch List country in the U.S. State Department *2009 Trafficking in Persons Report*.<sup>24</sup> According to the report, "senior members of the Qatari government have indicated their plans to finalize and enact a draft comprehensive law on human trafficking."

In May 2004, the emir issued a new labor law, which gives Qatari nationals the right to form associations with legal status and allows workers to strike. The legislation also bans employing youth under the age of 16, sets the working day at eight hours, and grants women equal rights with men, in addition to a paid 50-day maternity leave. Some observers have criticized the new legislation for not extending legal protections to Qatar's large foreign workforce. Critics charge that the labor law places additional restrictions on guest workers by prohibiting non-citizens from forming labor unions and restricting their ability to bargain collectively and to strike. Law Number 7 of 2007 established a labor court to hear the grievances of foreign laborers.

The 2009 State Department human rights report concludes that "authorities severely restricted worker rights, especially for foreign laborers and domestic servants." The 2008 State Department report stated that "legislation guiding the sponsorship of foreign laborers created conditions constituting forced labor or slavery." Since 2007, the annual State Department reports have cited foreign diplomats' visits to labor camps as having revealed "the majority of unskilled foreign laborers living in cramped, dirty, and hazardous conditions, often without running water, electricity, or adequate food."

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Department of State, 2009 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Qatar, February 25, 2009. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrprt/2008/nea/119125.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> The new Qatari constitution does not address the rights of foreign guest workers.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. State Department 2009 Trafficking in Persons Report on Qatar available at <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/123139.htm>. Released on June 16, 2009.

## **Islam and Religious Freedom<sup>25</sup>**

Islam is the official religion of the state of Qatar. Conditional freedom of worship is protected under the constitution, although proselytizing by non-Muslims is illegal. Qatar, like Saudi Arabia, officially adheres to the Wahhabi version of Sunni Islam; however, in contrast with Saudi Arabia, Wahhabi social tenets are not publicly enforced or strictly adhered to in many public settings.<sup>26</sup> Qatar hosts a number of conservative Islamic clerics, including Dr. Yusuf Al Qaradawi, a controversial figure whose views on the conditional legitimacy of suicide bombing and whose outspoken critiques of Israel, the United States, and terrorism have made him a target of criticism from a wide range of observers. During the summer 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war and 2008-2009 Israel-Hamas war, Qaradawi publicly argued that Muslims should support the activities of Hezbollah and Hamas as legitimate resistance activities, based on Quranic injunctions to defend Muslim territory invaded by outsiders.<sup>27</sup> Qaradawi hosts a popular weekly call-in television show on *Al Jazeera* and frequently delivers sermons in Qatari mosques.

Qaradawi has worked with a charitable umbrella organization known as the Union of Good that coordinates the delivery of relief and assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In November 2008, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated the Union of Good as a financial supporter of terrorism pursuant to Executive Order 13224. According to the Treasury, “The Union of Good acts as a broker for Hamas by facilitating financial transfers between a web of charitable organizations—including several organizations previously designated under E.O. 13224 for providing support to Hamas—and Hamas-controlled organizations in the West Bank and Gaza.”<sup>28</sup>

According to the State Department 2009 report on international religious freedom, Qatar has officially recognized the Catholic, Anglican, Greek and other Eastern Orthodox, Coptic, and Indian Christian churches, and permits private worship for other denominations and religions.<sup>29</sup> In November 2005, the emir donated a plot of land for the construction of a \$7 million Anglican church; construction began in April 2006.<sup>30</sup> A new Roman Catholic church opened in March 2008 and others remain under construction. Qatar established diplomatic ties with the Holy See in November 2002. Qatar does not ban alcohol, which is available in licensed premises such as the bars of major hotels and clubs.

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<sup>25</sup> U.S. State Department 2009 International Religious Freedom Report on Qatar available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127356.htm>. Released on October 26, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> For more on Sunni Islam and Wahhabism, see CRS Report RS21745, *Islam: Sunnis and Shiites*; and CRS Report RS21695, *The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyah*, both by Christopher M. Blanchard.

<sup>27</sup> “Islamic Cleric Al-Qaradawi Supports Hizballah, HAMAS,” *Al-Jazirah Television* (Doha), OSC Document GMP20060730638004, July 30, 2006. Qaradawi is regarded as conservative by many Muslims, although his declared views on the legitimacy of “struggle” and “martyrdom operations” against “occupation forces” have made him controversial to some in the Islamic world as well as many in the United States and Israel. He has been criticized by violent Islamic groups for his condemnations of terrorist attacks on civilians.

<sup>28</sup> For more on the Union of Good, see <http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp1267.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. State Department Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, International Religious Freedom Report – 2009, Qatar, released October 26, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Theodoulou, “Muslim State to Build first Christian Church for 1,400 Years,” *The Times* (London) November 2, 2005.

## ***Al Jazeera and the Qatari Media***

Shaikh Hamad helped establish the *Al Jazeera* satellite television news network in 1996 with a \$140 million grant. Since then, the Qatari government has provided most of the channel's funding, as advertising revenue reportedly does not support the entirety of *Al Jazeera*'s annual operating expenses. In the past, Qatari government officials and *Al Jazeera* executives have argued that the station's inability to attract sufficient advertising revenue was a function of the channel's controversial status across the Middle East. These officials and executives alleged that other Arab governments exerted pressure on companies based in or operating in their countries to refrain from advertising on *Al Jazeera*, because the channel was providing coverage of internal political, social, and economic developments that may have been unflattering to ruling regimes or less biased or censored than traditional government-run media outlets.<sup>31</sup>

As *Al Jazeera* became more widely accepted in the region and stepped back its criticism of some regional governments, these concerns became less relevant. The proliferation of similar satellite news channels in the region also has increased competition and created outlets for other views. Some parties may continue to disagree with what they perceive to be *Al Jazeera*'s editorial position on controversial subjects like Iran, Iraq, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since its founding, *Al Jazeera* has devoted considerably less of its air time to coverage of Qatari affairs than to coverage of the internal affairs of other Arab states. *Al Jazeera* launched an international English language satellite channel in 2006 that now broadcasts in the United States. It has won praise from some media observers for its coverage of international affairs, including conflicts and issues often overlooked by other media outlets. Others have criticized the international English channel as carrying the same alleged biases reflected in the programming of its Arabic language affiliate.

Although the Qatari government lifted formal censorship of the Qatari media by decree in 1995, the U.S. Department of State reports that journalists tend to exercise a degree of self-censorship, particularly with regard to the emir and his immediate family.<sup>32</sup> Internet service in Qatar is monitored for pornography and other material considered insulting to Islam. In January 2008, Qatar signed an agreement with Reporters Without Borders to create the Doha Media Freedom Center, an organization intended to spread "the culture of freedom of the press and media and in defending the press and media people who are subjected to harassment, detention and ill-treatment because of their professional activity."<sup>33</sup> Its director, former Reporters Without Borders head Robert Menard, resigned in a public spat with Qatari leaders in June 2009 after he claimed that the Center "has been suffocated," and alleged that "some Qatari officials never wanted an independent Center, free to speak out without concern for politics or diplomacy, free to criticize even Qatar."<sup>34</sup> Qatari observers alleged mismanagement by Menard and criticized him as having pursued an agenda that jeopardized Qatar's diplomatic relationships. The Center remains active.

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<sup>31</sup> Author meeting at Al Jazeera headquarters, January 2005.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices , Qatar - 2006, March 6, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> *Qatar News Agency*, "Deal on media freedom signed," January 4, 2008.

<sup>34</sup> *Agence France Presse*, "French head of Qatar media watchdog quits," June 23, 2009.

## **Education**

Qatar has invested heavily in improving the educational opportunities available to its citizens in recent years. The investment is designed to support Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani's program of "Qatarization," which seeks to prepare the next generation of Qatari citizens (total citizen population is 200,000-250,000) to assume leadership roles in the country's economy and political and military institutions. Prominent Qatari women have taken a leading role in a number of education reform programs,<sup>35</sup> and, in 2002, Shaikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, one of Shaikh Hamad's wives, helped launch Qatar's Education City, a state-of-the-art campus complex in Doha. Shaikha Mozah serves as the chairperson of the Qatar Foundation, which directs Education City's activities.<sup>36</sup> Education City and its university programs sit at the top of a diverse Qatari public and private education system, which serves both Qatari citizens, resident expatriates, and visiting students from around the world. Qatari citizens receive tuition support for participation in primary, secondary, and university education, and the Qatari government offers significant financial support to many institutions to facilitate their establishment and operation.

Today, Education City houses the Qatar Academy, which offers a pre-kindergarten through high school program, and a number of university programs, which offer degrees from several U.S. partner-universities such as Weill Cornell Medical College, Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Texas A&M University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Northwestern University, and Carnegie Mellon University. Qatar Foundation officials indicate that the programs, while of immediate benefit to Qatari students, also are intended to serve as centers of educational excellence for students from elsewhere in the region. The U.S.-partner university programs are consistently ranked among the most competitive and demanding undergraduate programs in surveys of colleges and universities in the United States. Carnegie Mellon University inaugurated a new facility on the campus in 2009, and the Qatar Foundation plans to complete new facilities for the Georgetown University and Northwestern University programs within the next three years.

## **Economic Overview**

In January 2009, the IMF concluded that, in spite of the global financial crisis and the resulting economic slowdown, "Qatar will still maintain on average double-digit growth rates in non-oil real GDP and will continue to record fiscal and current account surpluses" over the medium term. Oil and natural gas production is the mainstay of Qatar's robust economy, which has experienced an average annual growth rate of 11.7% from 2005 through 2009.<sup>37</sup> Shaikh Hamad has borrowed heavily from foreign banks since the late 1990s in order to modernize Qatar's energy infrastructure. The efforts have produced significant returns, and the Economist Intelligence

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<sup>35</sup> On May 5, 2003, Shaikh Hamad appointed Shaikha Bint Ahmed al Mahmoud, daughter of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, as Minister of Education. This appointment signified the first appointment ever of a female cabinet minister in any Gulf state. She resigned in April 2009 and was replaced by a member of her family Saad Bin Ibrahim al Mahmoud.

<sup>36</sup> For more on Education City and the Qatar Foundation, which oversees its activities, see the Foundation's website, available at <http://www.qf.edu.qa/output/Page1.asp>.

<sup>37</sup> CRS calculation using Economist Intelligence Unit economic data series DGDP: percentage change in real GDP. EIU data is "based on estimates from the Planning Council at the State of Qatar." May 2010.

Unit's annual growth projection for Qatar in 2010 is over 23%, led by projected increases in natural gas export revenue.<sup>38</sup> In February 2007, Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al Thani reiterated that Qatar is pursuing parallel economic reform, education, and investment strategies in order to create economic growth opportunities not tied to the country's natural resources.<sup>39</sup>

Qatar Petroleum (QP), the state-owned oil company, increased its output from 593,000 barrels per day (b/d) in 1999 to approximately 824,000 b/d after an OPEC-coordinated production cut in December 2008.<sup>40</sup> The Central Intelligence Agency 2009 estimate for Qatari oil production was 797,000 b/d. However, with oil reserves likely to be exhausted by 2026 at current production rates, Qatar has rapidly moved to exploit its vast natural gas reserves.<sup>41</sup> Japan, South Korea, and Singapore are the leading importers of oil from Qatar.

As part of a long-term development strategy, Qatar has tapped international financial markets and invited foreign investment in recent years in order to finance the expansion of its gas extraction and liquified natural gas (LNG) production facilities.<sup>42</sup> The Export-Import Bank of the United States has provided over \$1 billion in loan guarantees to support the development of Qatar's gas production facilities in cooperation with a range of U.S., European, and Asian companies, banks, and export credit agencies.<sup>43</sup>

Qatar has expanded its yearly LNG output from 4.5 million tons annually in 2002 to 43 million tons in 2009, and is now the world's largest exporter of LNG.<sup>44</sup> By 2012, the final pending LNG projects are scheduled to be complete, bringing annual output capacity to 78 million tons.

Although Qatar's LNG industry has low capital costs due to government investment, it has high operational costs, which has required Qatar to develop economies of scale in order to be more competitive with established LNG exporters such as Indonesia and Nigeria.<sup>45</sup> The large natural gas production and shipping facilities at the coastal city of Ras Laffan in northern Qatar serve as the main site for the country's gas development projects, with several independent gas production and conversion "trains" linked to corresponding fields and contracted export markets. Long-term contracts at fixed prices have ensured that Qatar has earned steady returns from its exports even

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<sup>38</sup> *Economist Intelligence Unit*, Country Data, Qatar, accessed May 4, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> *The Peninsula* (Doha)/Reuters, "Qatari FM Hints at Changes in Sponsorship Rules, Diversification of Economy," February 27, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> *Economist Intelligence Unit*, "Qatar has cut oil production in line with OPEC's decision," December 8, 2008.

<sup>41</sup> With proven oil reserves of 15.2 billion barrels, Qatar has far less oil than the major Persian Gulf producers, such as Kuwait (96.5 billion barrels), Iraq (112 billion barrels), and Saudi Arabia (252 billion barrels). However, Qatar has the third largest natural gas reserves in the world behind Russia and Iran. Qatar's supply of natural gas doubled in 2002, when surveyors discovered new gas deposits in Qatar's north field.

<sup>42</sup> Qatar's government has a 60%-70% stake in two joint partnerships with foreign firms, including ExxonMobil (USA), TotalFinaElf (France), KoGas (South Korea), and Matsui (Japan). In February 2005, Qatar Petroleum signed a \$7 billion agreement with Shell and a \$12 billion agreement with ExxonMobil to export natural gas to the United States and Europe.

<sup>43</sup> For example, since 1996, the Export Import Bank has provided loan guarantees to support the export of U.S. equipment and services for the construction of facilities at Ras Laffan, including most recently, the construction of natural gas liquefaction plants and facilities associated with the QatarGas II and III projects. See Export Import Bank of the United States, "Ex-Im Bank \$930 Million Guarantee Supports U.S. Exports to Build LNG Plant in Qatar," November 18, 2004; and Export Import Bank of the United States, "Ex-Im Bank Finances QatarGas 3 Liquid Natural Gas Complex, December 15, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> *Middle East Economic Digest*, "Doha continues to shine," October 30, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Meeting with Qatar Petroleum, Qatar Gas, and Ras Gas executives, Ras Laffan, Qatar, January 2005.

in light of the global economic downturn. Qatar participates in and hosts the headquarters of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, an assembly of major gas exporting countries that some have described as a potential natural gas OPEC.<sup>46</sup>

Qatar has signed several agreements with U.S. energy companies (ConocoPhillips and ExxonMobil) and other international companies to develop facilities to export LNG to the United States, the UK, Spain, Italy, South Korea, Taiwan, and India. Under Project Dolphin, Qatar has begun exporting natural gas via an underwater pipeline to the United Arab Emirates, although objections from Saudi Arabia have limited progress in other areas (see “Qatari Foreign Policy,” below). Qatari government officials reported that natural gas revenues exceeded oil income for the first time in 2008. Qatar also is in the midst of gas-to-liquids (GTL) projects and aims to become the largest GTL producer in the world.<sup>47</sup> In February 2007, Qatar Petroleum and ExxonMobil announced that a planned joint-GTL production facility project would be cancelled in the wake of rising cost projections. Other GTL plans are proceeding.

## U.S.-Qatari Relations

A U.S. embassy opened in Doha in 1973, but U.S. relations with Qatar did not blossom until after the 1991 Persian Gulf war. In the late 1980s, the United States and Qatar engaged in a prolonged diplomatic dispute regarding Qatar’s black market procurement of U.S.-made Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.<sup>48</sup> The dispute froze planned economic and military cooperation, and Congress approved a ban on arms sales to Qatar (Section 566(d), P.L. 100-461) until the months leading up to the 1991 Gulf War, when Qatar allowed coalition forces to operate from Qatari territory and agreed to destroy the missiles in question.<sup>49</sup> In January 1991, Qatari armored forces helped coalition troops repel an Iraqi attack on the Saudi Arabian town of Kafji, on the coastal road leading south from Kuwait into Saudi Arabia’s oil-rich Eastern Province.<sup>50</sup> In June 1992, Qatar signed a defense cooperation agreement with the United States, opening a period of close coordination in military affairs that has continued to the present.

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<sup>46</sup> In February 2010, GECF Secretary General Leonid Bokhanovsky told Qatar’s *Gulf Times*, “Naturally, the positive experience of OPEC was taken into consideration in the process of development of the GECF organizational structure, though characteristic properties of oil and gas necessitate different angles of approach.” Specifically, Bokhanovsky highlighted the transportation and storage requirements of natural gas and the corresponding use of long-term supply and delivery contracts as key differences influencing the approach of GECF members.

<sup>47</sup> For more information on GTL and Qatar’s GTL projects, see U.S. Energy Information Administration, Qatar Country Analysis Brief, December 2009. Available at: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/Qatar/NaturalGas.html>.

<sup>48</sup> Qatar defended its procurement of the missiles in protest of the sale of similar missiles by the United States to Bahrain, with which Qatar had an unresolved border dispute until 2001. Elaine Sciolino, “Qatar Rejects U.S. Demand For Return of Illicit Stingers,” *New York Times*, June 28, 1988; Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. Drawn Into Gulf Dispute - Stray Stingers Tied To Qatar-Bahrain Tiff,” *Washington Post*, October 6, 1988.

<sup>49</sup> The ban was formally repealed by the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1991 (Section 568(b), P.L. 101-513). The conference report on H.R. 5114, Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1991 (H.Rept. 101-968) inserted Senate language (Amendment No. 144) that repealed the ban based on information provided by the Secretary of Defense “that it is in the national interest to reestablish United States-Qatari security relations because of their support for United States troops in the Middle East.”

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Ferraro, “Allies Retake Saudi City,” *United Press International*, January 31, 1991; and Joseph Albright, “Marines Take Credit for Khafji Victory,” *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, February 3, 1991.

The United States promptly recognized the assumption of power by Shaikh Hamad in June 1995 and has welcomed Qatar's defense cooperation, as well as Qatari political, economic, and educational reform efforts since that time. Qatari-U.S. defense relations have expanded over the last 15 years to include cooperative defense exercises, equipment pre-positioning, and base access agreements, although Qatari officials have been, at times, critical of U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf.<sup>51</sup> U.S. concerns regarding alleged material support for terrorist groups by some Qataris, including members of the royal family, have been balanced over time by Qatar's counterterrorism efforts and its broader, long-term commitment to host and support U.S. military forces being used in ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, Qatari-U.S. relations remain cordial and close. Since September 2005, Qatar has donated \$100 million to victims of Hurricane Katrina in the U.S. Gulf states.

The U.S. has provided limited counterterrorism assistance to Qatar to support the development of its domestic security forces (see **Table 1** below), and the Export-Import Bank has provided over \$2 billion in loan guarantees to support various natural gas development projects in Qatar since 1996.

**Table 1. U.S. Foreign Assistance to Qatar FY2005-2010 and FY2011 Request**  
(\$ thousands)

Account	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010 Estimate	FY2011 Request
IMET <sup>a</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	10	10
NADR-ATA <sup>b</sup>	1,379	788	1,120 <sup>c</sup>	268 <sup>c</sup>	-	-	-
NADR-CTF	-	118			-	-	-

**Source:** U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justifications for Foreign Operations, FY2007-FY2011.

- a. Qatar did not participate in the IMET program prior to FY2010. The Bush Administration requested the provision of nominal IMET assistance because Qatari participation in the IMET program would make Qatar eligible to purchase other U.S. training at a reduced cost. The Obama Administration continued this request for FY2010. Section 21(c) of P.L.90-629, the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) as amended, states that IMET recipient countries are eligible to purchase non-IMET training at reduced cost. Section 108(a) of P.L. 99-83 amended the AECA to provide this reduced cost benefit to IMET recipients. The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) implements the authority provided in P.L. 99-83 to apply a lower cost to U.S. military training purchased by Qatar and other IMET recipient countries through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. At present, the "incremental rates" applied to the FMS training purchases of IMET recipient countries are calculated according to the terms outlined in Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation (FMR), Volume 15, Chapter 7 (Sections 0711 and 0712).
- b. Through the end of FY2006, over \$3.3 million in Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, De-mining and Related Programs - Anti-terrorism Assistance (NADR - ATA) has been provided to train over 500 Qatari security officers and officials since FY1987.
- c. Aid allocation amounts released by the State Department did not distinguish between NADR sub-accounts.

<sup>51</sup> Qatari officials at times took steps to distance themselves from Operation Southern Watch and associated U.S. and coalition air strikes in the southern no-fly zone of Iraq.

## Defense, Security, and Terrorism

### U.S.-Qatar Defense Cooperation

With its small territory and narrow population base, Qatar relies to a large degree on external cooperation and support for its security. With a personnel strength of 11,800, Qatar's armed forces are the second-smallest in the Middle East.<sup>52</sup> France has provided approximately 80% of Qatar's arms inventory. Since the 1991 Gulf war, Qatar has pursued a limited program of force modernization. To date, however, it has not purchased significant U.S. weapons systems, although the Qatari government may be considering the purchase of U.S. air and missile defense systems in line with regional trends.

The Al Udeid airbase south of Doha, the Qatari capital, serves as a logistics, command, and basing hub for U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Nearby Camp As Sayliyah houses significant U.S. military equipment pre-positioning and command facilities for the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations. Qatar invested over \$1 billion to construct the Al Udeid air base during the 1990s; it did not have an air force of its own at the time. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also awarded over \$100 million dollars in Military Construction Air Force (MCAF) contracts for the construction of U.S. storage, housing, service, command, and communication facilities. Qatar's financing and construction of some of the state-of-the-art air force base at Al Udeid and its granting of permission for the construction of U.S.-funded facilities facilitated gradually deeper cooperation with U.S. military forces. U.S. access to the base there was formalized in late 2000. In April 2003, the U.S. Combat Air Operations Center for the Middle East moved from Prince Sultan Airbase in Saudi Arabia to Qatar's Al Udeid. Qatar contributed \$400 million to U.S. efforts to upgrade and construct facilities there, including a new air operations command center.<sup>53</sup> The base currently serves as the home of the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing.

From FY2003 to FY2007, Congress appropriated and authorized \$126 million for U.S. military construction activities in Qatar. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (P.L. 110-181) authorized \$81.7 million in FY2008 spending to build new Air Force and Special Operations facilities in Qatar. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (P.L. 110-417) authorizes \$69.6 million in FY2009 spending to build new Air Force and Special Operations facilities. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (P.L. 111-84) authorizes \$60 million in FY2010 spending to build new Air Force recreational and dormitory facilities at Al Udeid. The Administration's FY2011 military construction request for Qatar is \$64.3 million.

### Internal Security

Terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia during 2003 and 2004 forced U.S. and Qatari officials to focus on Qatar's internal security, as analysts have expressed concern that Al Qaeda operatives displaced by an ongoing Saudi crackdown or other local terrorist cells could try to establish a

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<sup>52</sup> Bahrain, with an estimated 11,000-member force, has the smallest.

<sup>53</sup> Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Will Move Air Operations to Qatar Base," *New York Times*, April 28, 2003; and Eric Schmitt, "Pentagon Construction Boom Beefs Up Mideast Air Bases," *New York Times*, September 18, 2005.

presence and destabilize Qatar. In November 2004, the U.S. State Department issued a warning of a possible terrorist attack against a hotel or hotels used by Americans in Doha. The warning expired without incident. On March 19, 2005, an Egyptian national carried out a car bomb attack at a theater popular with Western expatriates on the outskirts of the capital city of Doha. The car bombing, the first terrorist incident of its kind in Qatar, killed one British citizen and wounded 12 others. The suicide bomber was an engineer employed at Qatar Petroleum, and authorities have been unable to definitively link him to Al Qaeda or other terrorist groups. The attack came on the second anniversary of the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom and a week after an Al Qaeda leader in Saudi Arabia called for a new wave of attacks against Western interests in the Persian Gulf. The Qatari Ministry of the Interior is responsible for internal security and is legally empowered to detain suspects without trial for up to two years.

## Terrorism Concerns

According to the 9/11 Commission Report and former U.S. government officials, royal family member and current Qatari Interior Minister Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Thani provided safe harbor and assistance to Al Qaeda leaders during the 1990s, including the suspected mastermind of the September 11 hijacking plot, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed.<sup>54</sup> Former U.S. officials and leaked U.S. government reports state that Osama Bin Laden also visited Doha twice during the mid-1990s as a guest of Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid, who then served as Qatar's minister for religious endowments and Islamic affairs, and, later, as minister of state for internal affairs. During a January 1996 visit to Doha, Bin Laden reportedly "discussed the successful movement of explosives into Saudi Arabia, and operations targeted against U.S. and U.K. interests in Dammam, Dharan, and Khobar, using clandestine Al Qaeda cells in Saudi Arabia."<sup>55</sup> According to other accounts, Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid welcomed dozens of so-called "Afghan Arab" veterans of the anti-Soviet conflict in Afghanistan to Qatar in the early 1990s and operated a farm where some of those individuals lived and worked over a period of several years.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> According to the 9/11 Commission Report, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed provided financial support to a co-conspirator in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing while living in Qatar and later moved his family to Qatar at Shaikh Abdallah bin Khalid Al Thani's suggestion. The Report also states that Mohammed "claims that Sheikh Abdallah was not a member, financier, or supporter of al Qaeda," and that Mohammed admitted "that Abdallah underwrote a 1995 trip [Mohammed] took to join the Bosnia jihad." Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (The 9/11 Commission Report), pp. 73, 147-8, 488-9. The Emir named Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid Al Thani to the post of Minister of Interior in January 2001, a post he continues to hold. His deputy, Minister of State for Interior Affairs Abdallah bin Nasir bin Khalifa Al Thani, currently serves as the official ministry liaison to foreign governments, including the United States. James Risen and David Johnston, "Qaeda Aide Slipped Away Long Before September 11 Attack," *New York Times*, March 8, 2003; Josh Meyer and John Goetz, "Qatar's Security Chief Suspected of Having Ties to Al Qaeda," *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Memorandum from the Department of Defense to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence partially reprinted in Steven F. Hayes, "Case Closed," *Weekly Standard*, November 24, 2003. Pentagon spokesmen responded to the publication of the excerpts from the memorandum in the Hayes article by indicating that the memorandum was a collection of intelligence data from various sources which did not constitute a finished intelligence product. It is unclear if Bin Laden's reported visit was related to preparations for the June 1996 attack on the Khobar Towers military barracks in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. servicemen. Press reporting from the late 1990s cites a former U.S. intelligence official as indicating that the "Qatari individual" who hosted Bin Laden was Abdallah Bin Khalid Al Thani. See James Risen and Benjamin Weiser, "U.S. Officials Say Aid for Terrorists Came Through Two Persian Gulf Nations," *New York Times*, July 8, 1999.

<sup>56</sup> James Risen and Benjamin Weiser, "U.S. Officials Say Aid for Terrorists Came Through Two Persian Gulf Nations," *New York Times*, July 8, 1999. James Risen and David Johnston, "Qaeda Aide Slipped Away Long Before Sept. 11 Attack," *New York Times*, March 8, 2003; Josh Meyer and John Goetz, "Qatar's Security Chief Suspected of Having Ties to Al Qaeda," *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 2003.

In January 1996, FBI officials narrowly missed an opportunity to capture Khalid Shaikh Mohammed in Qatar, where he held a government job at Qatar's Ministry of Electricity and Water. Mohammed had been targeted for arrest in connection with an investigation of his nephew—1993 World Trade Center bombing mastermind Ramzi Yousef.<sup>57</sup> The FBI dispatched a team to arrest Mohammed, but he fled Qatar before he could be detained. Some former U.S. officials have since stated their belief that a high-ranking member of the Qatari government alerted Mohammed to the impending raid, allowing him to flee the country.<sup>58</sup>

More recent concerns regarding potential support for terrorism by prominent Qataris have centered around claims that the late Abu Musab Al Zarqawi may have transited Qatar after September 11, 2001, and benefitted from a safehouse and financial support provided by a member of the ruling Al Thani family.<sup>59</sup> Any discussions by Clinton Administration or Bush Administration officials with the government of Qatar regarding these allegations have not been made public. U.S. security officials working to ensure the safety and security of U.S. facilities, citizens, and assets in Qatar have reported that their relationships with Ministry of Interior officials, including serving Minister of State for Interior Affairs Shaikh Abdullah bin Nasir bin Khalifah Al Thani, are positive and cooperative. The emir reappointed Shaikh Abdullah bin Khalid as minister of interior in April 2007 and did not alter his status in a 2008 expansion of the cabinet or in a 2009 cabinet reshuffle.

## Counterterrorism Support

The U.S. State Department has characterized Qatar's counterterrorism support since September 11, 2001, as "significant,"<sup>60</sup> but noted in its April 2009 report on terrorism issues that U.S. officials "continued to strive for increased cooperation with the Qatari government on information sharing."<sup>61</sup> Qatar's Combating Terrorism Law, passed in March 2004, established definitions of terrorism and terrorist financing and broadened the government's power to detect and prevent terrorist threats and to investigate and prosecute terrorists and their supporters. Qatar also established the Qatar Authority for Charitable Activities (QACA) in March 2004 to monitor the activities of all Qatari domestic and international charitable organizations, including prominent organizations such as the Qatar Charitable Society and the Shaikh Eid bin Mohammed Al Thani Charitable Association. All international financial charity transfers and project verification fall within the jurisdiction of the new QACA.<sup>62</sup> However, Article 24 of the law establishing the authority allows the emir to grant an exemption from QACA oversight to any organization at any time. Qatar's central bank operates a financial intelligence unit (FIU) which

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<sup>57</sup> According to the 9/11 Commission Report (p. 147), Khalid Shaikh Mohammed "engaged in extensive international travel during his tenure [at the Ministry of Electricity and Water]... much of it in furtherance of terrorist activity."

<sup>58</sup> "The U.S. Attorney obtained an indictment against KSM in January 1996, but an official in the government of Qatar probably warned him about it... In January 1996, well aware that U.S. authorities were chasing him, he left Qatar for good and fled to Afghanistan." *9/11 Commission Report*, p. 73. The Report provides the following citation: "Intelligence report, interrogation of KSM, July 23, 2003."

<sup>59</sup> Patrick E. Tyler "Intelligence Break Let Powell Link Iraq and Qaeda," *New York Times*, February 3, 2003.

<sup>60</sup> U.S. State Department - Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004, April 27, 2005.

<sup>61</sup> U.S. State Department - Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Country Reports on Terrorism, 2008, April 30, 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Author interview with QACA Chairman Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman bin Hasan Al Thani, Doha, Qatar, April 2005.

monitors activity in Qatar's banking system and serves as a liaison office to similar units in the United States and around the world.<sup>63</sup>

## Trade and Economic Relations

Trade between the United States and Qatar has increased since the 1990-1991 Gulf War. U.S. exports to Qatar amounted to \$2.72 billion in 2009, consisting mainly of machinery and transport equipment. U.S. imports from Qatar, mainly fuel and fertilizers, totaled \$505.8 million during 2009.<sup>64</sup> Although the bulk of Qatar's trade continues to be with a few European countries and Japan, several U.S. firms, including ExxonMobil, Occidental Petroleum, and Pennzoil are active in the development of Qatar's oil and gas resources. ExxonMobil and an affiliate of Qatar Petroleum are cooperating in the construction of a large LNG terminal (known as Golden Pass) on the Texas coast that was damaged by Hurricane Ike and now is expected to receive its first shipment of Qatari LNG in October 2010, subject to market conditions.<sup>65</sup>

## Qatari Foreign Policy

A combination of factors—strains with Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, shared resources with Iran, and aspiration to a more influential role in world affairs—has contributed to Qatar's independent foreign policy approach since 1992. Although it was an active member of the allied coalition formed during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis and participated in post-war security arrangements, Qatar adopted a conciliatory stance toward both Iraq and Iran before the other members of the GCC. Qatar restored diplomatic ties with Saddam Hussein's regime shortly after the 1991 Gulf War, hosted visits by the Iraqi foreign minister, and called for relaxing economic sanctions against Iraq.

Nevertheless, Qatar played an important logistics role in Operation Iraqi Freedom, providing headquarters for the U.S. Central Command and pre-positioning facilities for U.S. tanks and armored personnel carriers. At the same time, the Al Jazeera news network has been criticized by some U.S. officials for being sensationalist in its coverage of U.S. military operations, for inciting violence, and for airing terrorist and insurgent propaganda. On May 8, 2003, President Bush hosted Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani at the White House, thanking him for his steadfast support during Operation Iraqi Freedom and highlighting his role as a reformer. Qatar continues to serve as an important base of operations for U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Qatar is a member of the United Nations, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).<sup>66</sup> Qatar is also a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and hosts the headquarters of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF). Qatar was a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council from 2005 to 2007 and used this position to support its assertive and independent policies.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Meeting with QCB Governor Abdallah bin Khalid Al Attiyah, Doha, Qatar, April 2005.

<sup>64</sup> United States International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, TradeStats Express - National Trade Data, accessed November 3, 2009.

<sup>65</sup> *The Peninsula* (Doha), "Golden Pass LNG Terminal to receive first Qatar shipment by Oct," April 1, 2010.

<sup>66</sup> The GCC is a sub-regional organization consisting of six states (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman) bordering the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

<sup>67</sup> Qatari diplomats attribute Qatar's varied positions on Security Council issues to Qatar's perceived need to represent (continued...)

Current Qatari concerns focus on positioning the country with regard to the ongoing confrontation between Iran and the international community, led by the United States, over nuclear technology. Qatar also has sought to mediate regional conflicts and political disputes, notably in Yemen, Lebanon, Sudan, and Gaza. Qatar's willingness to maintain relations with Iran, Syria, and Hamas has generated some criticism in the United States in recent years, such as Senator John Kerry's April 2009 admonition that "Qatar ... can't continue to be an American ally on Monday that sends money to Hamas on Tuesday."<sup>68</sup>

Qatari officials are quick to point out their commitment to the general goal of regional peace and their support for U.S. military operations, even as they maintain a conservative approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In June 2009, U.S. Ambassador to Qatar Joseph LeBaron explained Qatar's policy in the following terms: "I think of it as Qatar occupying a space in the middle of the ideological spectrum in the Islamic world, with the goal of having doors open to it across that ideological spectrum. They have the resources to accomplish that vision, and that's rare."<sup>69</sup> By all accounts, Qatar's balancing strategy toward its relationship with the United States and regional powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia is likely to persist, which may continue to place Doha and Washington on opposing sides of some important issues even amid close cooperation on others.

## Persian Gulf States

### Bahrain

Territorial disputes marred Qatar's relations with Bahrain from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until recently. Emigrant members of the Kuwait-based Utub tribe settled in Bahrain and northern Qatar during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequent political divergences led the leading families of Qatar and Bahrain to jointly claim sovereignty over the Hawar island chain in the waters separating the two states, along with the now-abandoned town of Zubarah on Qatar's northwestern coast. The two states engaged in a number of minor military skirmishes related to the claims over the years. On March 16, 2001, after seven years of deliberations, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that Qatar has sovereignty over Zubarah and that Bahrain has sovereignty over the Hawar islands.<sup>70</sup> In June 2006, Qatar and Bahrain signed an agreement to construct a 28-mile causeway, aptly named the "Friendship Bridge," which will connect the two kingdoms.<sup>71</sup> Recent plans to add railroad connections to the causeway project will extend the project beyond its expected four and a half year completion target and estimated cost of \$3 billion.<sup>72</sup> U.S. firm KBR was selected in September 2008 as the project manager.

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(...continued)

the positions of other Arab and Muslim states on specific issues as well as to pursue independent political initiatives. Author interview with Qatari officials, Washington, DC, September 2006.

<sup>68</sup> US Fed News, "Sen. Kerry Speaks on Middle East to Brookings Institute," April 2, 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Carrie Sheffield, "Tiny nation, global clout," *Washington Times*, June 24, 2009.

<sup>70</sup> "The Islands Dispute - Resolved," *Middle East Economic Digest*, September 28, 2001.

<sup>71</sup> Reem Khalifa, "Persian Gulf States Bahrain and Qatar to be Linked Via Causeway," *Associated Press*, June 11, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Saudi Economic Survey, "\$3 billion Bahrain- Qatar Causeway on track," September 6, 2009.

## Saudi Arabia

Historically, Qatar has been deeply affected by political and economic conditions in neighboring Saudi Arabia, particularly by changes in the Al Saud family's control over the eastern province of Al Hasa and the movements of Bedouin tribes loyal to the Al Saud into and out of Qatar. During Qatar's pre-independence period, the Al Saud family long regarded Qatar as either tacitly or explicitly under its jurisdiction, and various Qatari leaders maintained a degree of autonomy by balancing relationships with the Al Saud and outside powers, such as the Ottoman and British empires. Similarly, the Al Saud sought to preserve their influence on the Qatari peninsula via relationships with Bedouin tribes and prominent Qataris, including leading businessmen and rival members of the ruling Al Thani family. Oil concession negotiations provided the impetus to firmly define the international boundary between Saudi Arabia and Qatar during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and an agreement was reached in 1965. An armed clash along the Saudi-Qatari border in 1992 led to the temporary suspension of the 1965 border agreement between the two countries. The border was tentatively demarcated in 1999 following lengthy consultations via a joint technical committee, and has been revisited as part of a recent rapprochement (see below).<sup>73</sup>

Saudi-Qatari relations are now cordial but remain marked by periodic indications of underlying tension. In 1970, Saudi Arabia reportedly supported the former emir, Shaikh Khalifa, in his effort to depose his predecessor. Some Qatari officials accused Saudi Arabia of supporting the unsuccessful attempt in 1996 by dissident Al Thani family members to restore Shaikh Khalifa following the palace coup that brought his son Hamad, the current emir, to power. From the mid-1990s until recently, differences between the two capitals frequently were aired in state-affiliated media; Al Jazeera's treatment of Saudi Arabia in its programming proved to be the most significant point of public contention between the two regimes. Saudi Arabia withdrew its ambassador from Doha in September 2002 in protest of an Al Jazeera program that criticized the kingdom's founder, King Abdul Aziz Al Saud. Similarly, Saudi-owned media outlets in London frequently criticized Qatar's foreign policy and questioned the Qatari government's positions on issues of pan-Arab importance.

Differences between the two governments at times have moved beyond rhetoric, such as in July 2006 when the Saudi Arabian embassy in the United Arab Emirates faxed a notice to financial backers of the \$3.5 billion Dolphin undersea natural gas pipeline project objecting to construction of the link between Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The Saudi notice reportedly claimed that the pipeline would pass through Saudi territorial waters without Saudi approval. Qatari and Emirati officials downplayed the reports and stated their expectation that the project would not be delayed. The pipeline was inaugurated in 2007 and continues to ship gas. Many observers interpreted the step as an indication that Saudi Arabia may have been trying to reassert its historically dominant role in relations among the smaller Gulf states and to underscore its boundary and territorial water claims, some of which have been questioned by sources in the UAE.<sup>74</sup> Prior tension between Qatar and Saudi Arabia disrupted plans for a similar pipeline to link Qatar with Kuwait.

A September 2007 visit to Riyadh by the Qatari emir opened a process of Saudi-Qatari rapprochement. In December 2007, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz visited Doha for the GCC

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<sup>73</sup> *Agence France-Presse*, "Riyadh and Doha Settle Longstanding Border Dispute," June 7, 1999.

<sup>74</sup> *Platts Oilgram*, "Qatar, UAE Play Down Dolphin Gas Pipeline Fears," Volume 84, Number 175, September 13, 2006.

summit and Saudi Arabia returned its ambassador to Qatar. A new technical committee was established in 2008 following an agreement to finally demarcate the Saudi-Qatari border based on the shared understanding between the two countries developed in the 1990s. Several exchanged visits by Qatari and Saudi officials during 2008 and 2009 appear to indicate that core tensions have been resolved. Nevertheless, some underlying tensions remain evident, particularly with regard to Qatar's activist foreign policy approach to some regional conflicts. In January 2009, Saudi officials refused to attend a summit organized by Qatar in response to Israeli military operations in Gaza, highlighting persistent differences of opinion and approach between the two neighboring states. Qatari outreach to Iran also serves as a potential irritant in Qatari-Saudi affairs to the extent that various figures in Saudi Arabia view Iran as a potential threat to the GCC and support policies of reduced engagement or outright containment toward Iran.

## Iraq

Relations between Qatar and the Iraqi government have been limited but friendly since 2003. In August 2004, the Iraqi government closed Al Jazeera's bureau office in Baghdad after accusing the station of airing material that incited violence.<sup>75</sup> Saddam Hussein's wife, Sajida Khayrallah Tilfa, and their daughter Hala at one time were alleged to live in Qatar at the private invitation of former Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalifa Al Thani.<sup>76</sup> In 2004, the U.S. Treasury Department designated Sajida and Hala under Executive Order 13315 and recommended that the U.N. Security Council 1518 Committee require that their assets be frozen and transferred to the Development Fund for Iraq.<sup>77</sup> In July 2006, Iraqi authorities listed Saddam's wife on their most wanted list for allegedly providing financial support to insurgents and demanded her extradition to Iraq.<sup>78</sup> Interpol has issued an international arrest warrant for Sajida Khayrallah Tilfa and another of Saddam's daughters, Raghad. Qatar and Iraq restored airline service links in September 2009 after an 18-year hiatus. Iraq has had an ambassador in Doha since March 2009. Qatar has not named an ambassador to Baghdad.

## Iran

Iran and Qatar have maintained positive relations, in spite of periods when Iran's relationships with the Arab Gulf states otherwise foundered, such as during the Iran-Iraq War and tanker war of the 1980s. Iran and Qatar share the large North Field/South Pars natural gas deposit off the Qatari coast, and related cooperation and negotiations have built on historical commercial and family ties between Qatari and Iranian Arabs. Qatari officials have met frequently with members of Iran's government in Iran and in Qatar in recent years, and the Qatari government regularly advocates for increased dialogue between the GCC states and Iran. Qatar's policy of referring to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf has led to diplomatic tension with Iran at times. In July 2006, Qatar was the sole member of the United Nations Security Council to oppose Security Council resolution 1696, which called on Iran to "suspend all enrichment-related and

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<sup>75</sup> Reuters, "Jazeera Says Iraq Closes its Baghdad Office," September 4, 2004.

<sup>76</sup> Ian Mather, "Money No Object for Dictator in the Mother of all Trials," *Scotland on Sunday*, December 12, 2004; and Kim Sengupta, "What Happened To The Husseins?" *The Independent* (UK), August 21, 2007.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of the Treasury, "JS-1242: Treasury Designates 16 Family Members of the Former Iraqi Regime, Submits 191 Iraqi Entities to United Nations," March 18, 2004.

<sup>78</sup> Associated Press, "Saddam's Relatives Sought," July 3, 2006.

reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the IAEA,” and proposed potential sanctions should Iran refuse.

Frequent high-level exchanges have characterized recent Qatari-Iranian relations, making Qatar unique among its GCC neighbors.<sup>79</sup> The visits have produced a series of cooperative announcements, most notably the signing of a security and defense cooperation agreement in February 2010. Most recently, Qatari heir apparent Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad visited Tehran in February 2010, and Emir Hamad bin Khalifa visited Tehran in November 2009.

## **Arab-Israeli Issues and Lebanon**

Although Qatar and Israel do not have formal diplomatic ties, Qatar has been in the forefront of Arab-Israeli talks on expanding economic ties during periods of progress in the peace process. Qatar’s position regarding the Arab boycott of Israel is governed by the September 1994 decision by the GCC to terminate enforcement of the indirect boycotts, while maintaining, at least in theory, the primary boycott. Qatar has hosted meetings of multilateral Arab-Israeli working groups. Then-Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres visited in April 1996.

Qatar agreed to the establishment of an Israeli trade mission in Doha, Qatar’s capital city, although relations cooled after the peace process slowed down in 1996. Following the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000, Qatar claimed to have shut down the office; however, according to Qatari officials, it continued to operate at a very low level.<sup>80</sup> Prior to the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Israeli Foreign Ministry closed the trade mission in Doha and evacuated three Israeli envoys and their families. Israel promised to reopen the office after the war.<sup>81</sup> Despite pressure from some other Arab states, Qatar hosted the fourth annual Middle East/North Africa Economic Conference (MENAC) in November 1997, which brought together Arab and Israeli business and political leaders to discuss regional economic cooperation.

In May 2003, Qatari and Israeli foreign ministers met in Paris to discuss ways of reviving the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The meeting took place only a week after the emir’s visit to Washington, prompting speculation that President Bush encouraged Qatari officials to take a more active role in the peace process. Shaikh Hamad has acknowledged that Qatar is keen to play a role in encouraging negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, but that it is too early to open full diplomatic ties with Israel. Analysts regard Qatar’s exchanges with Israel, though limited, as broadly in accord with U.S. efforts to foster an expanding dialogue between Israel and Arab states.

Qatar offered \$50 million in financial support to the then-Hamas-led Palestinian Authority government and has hosted Hamas officials for numerous talks and consultations since January 2006. In October 2006, the Qatari government launched an ultimately unsuccessful round of shuttle diplomacy aimed at resolving differences between Palestinian factions and securing the release of kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit by his Hamas captors.<sup>82</sup> Israeli Foreign Minister

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<sup>79</sup> Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad attended the December 2007 GCC summit in Doha at the invitation of the Qatari emir. He also attended a January 2009 summit on Gaza sponsored by the Qatari emir.

<sup>80</sup> Meeting with the Qatari Minister of State, Ahmed Abdullah Al Mehmood, January 12, 2003.

<sup>81</sup> “Israel Shuts Qatar Mission, To Reduce Staff in Egypt, Jordan, Mauritania,” *Yedi’ot Aharonot*, March 3, 2003, OSC Document GMP20030311000208.

<sup>82</sup> *Daily Star* (Beirut), “Qatari Mediation Fails to Bridge Hamas-Fatah Gap,” October 11, 2006.

Tzipi Livni declined a Qatari invitation to participate in an October 2006 democracy conference in Doha because of the presence of Hamas representatives, but an Israeli delegation participated in the conference, led by lower-ranking Foreign Ministry officials.<sup>83</sup> Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres visited Qatar in February 2007 and declined the emir's reported suggestion that Israel negotiate directly with Hamas.<sup>84</sup>

In response to Israel's military operations in Gaza in December 2008 and January 2009, Qatar ordered the Israeli trade mission in Doha to close. Qatar also hosted an emergency summit on Gaza that was attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and Hamas political leader Khaled Meshaal. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas visited Doha in late August 2009 in search of Qatari support in Palestinian unity negotiations and as part of a broader effort to build a unified Arab position on the question of Israeli commitments under the Roadmap. In August, Qatar offered \$10 million in cash payments via the Hamas Administration in Gaza to support thousands of unemployed Palestinians, including fishermen facing difficulty in relation to Israel's blockade of Gaza's coastal waters. Hamas political leader Khaled Meshaal visited Doha on September 7 and met with heir apparent Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani. Meshaal visited Doha again in April 2010. In March 2009, Qatar pledged \$150 million for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip at the international donors conference in Sharm el Shaikh, Egypt.

The outbreak of violence between Hezbollah and other Lebanese factions in early 2008 prompted direct diplomatic intervention from the Qatari government and other Arab states. Fearing continued violence and possibly another civil war, the Arab League and the Qatari government facilitated negotiations between rival Lebanese factions in Doha in May 2008. In the resulting "Doha Agreement," the factions committed to end the violence, fill the vacant presidency, arrange for a power-sharing agreement in the cabinet, and hold parliamentary elections in 2009 based on updated electoral laws. In a statement following the negotiations, then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that the Bush Administration viewed the agreement as a "positive step toward resolving the current crisis." Qatari intervention reportedly was perceived by other Arab states as a challenge to traditional patterns of regional leadership, particularly by Saudi Arabia.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *Agence France Presse*, "Livni Shuns Qatar Conference, but Israel There," October 29, 2006.

<sup>84</sup> Danna Harman, "Tiny Qatar Vies for Big Regional Role," Christian Science Monitor, February 6, 2007.

<sup>85</sup> See CRS Report R40054, *Lebanon: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Casey L. Addis.

## Appendix A. Qatar in Brief

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<b>Area:</b>	11,437 sq km (slightly smaller than Connecticut)
<b>Population (April 2010):</b>	1.67 million
<b>Literacy:</b>	89%
<b>Religion (2004 Census):</b>	77.5% Muslim, Christian 8.5%, other 14%
<b>Ethnic Groups:</b>	40% Arab, 18% Pakistani, 18% Indian, 10% Iranian, 14% other
<b>GDP (2009):</b>	\$121,700 per capita (based on \$101.4 billion GDP PPP)
<b>Inflation (2009):</b>	-3.9%
<b>Oil Reserves (2009):</b>	15.21 billion barrels
<b>Gas Reserves (2009):</b>	25.26 trillion cubic meters
<b>Armed Forces:</b>	11,800 active personnel, 30 main battle tanks, 18 fighter aircraft

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**Sources:** U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook - Qatar*, May 2010; Qatar Statistics Agency, May 2010; Armed forces data - International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Military Balance 2010*, February 2010.

## **Appendix B. Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Qatar**

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Emir	Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani
Heir Apparent	Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani
Prime Minister	Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al Thani
Deputy Prime Minister	Abdallah bin Hamad Al Attiyah
Foreign Minister	Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr Al Thani
Energy Minister	Abdallah bin Hamad Al Attiyah
Interior Minister	Abdallah bin Khalid Al Thani <sup>a</sup>
Finance Minister	Youssef Hussein Al Kamal
Ambassador to the United States	Ali Fahad Al Shahwany Al Hajri

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a. Minister of State for Interior Affairs Abdallah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani conducts the official business of the Ministry of Interior, including serving as liaison to foreign governments and security services.

**Figure B-1. Map of Qatar**



**Source:** U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook, November 2009.

## **Author Contact Information**

Christopher M. Blanchard  
Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs  
[cblanchard@crs.loc.gov](mailto:cblanchard@crs.loc.gov), 7-0428